

Your

August - 1975

JUG 7 '75

# Lake County HERITAGE

INDIANA COLLECTION

Vol 2 No 3

LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1875 1975



DO NOT CIRCULATE

***Historical Society***  
***100 Years Old***

In the year 1875 a group of Lake County pioneers and old settlers met at the Lake County Courthouse on July 24 and decided to form The Old Settlers Association of Lake

County and to hold yearly meetings to renew old acquaintances and to recount pioneer experiences.

NEXT MEETING AUGUST 9, 1975

THE LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL HOLD IT'S ANNUAL MEETING AT HOMFELDS FARM 7 MILES EAST OF LOWELL ON ROUTE 2 AT THE DUCK POND.

THE POT LUCK PICNIC WILL BEGAN AT 12 NOON AND THE ANNUAL MEETING WILL FOLLOW WITH THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS BEING HELD. NOMINATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM THE FLOOR. PLEASE COME OUT AND ENJOY THIS PICNIC OUTING, THE COUNTRY ATMOSPHERE, AND STIMULATING COMPANY.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE COVER STORY

ON THE COVER OF THIS ISSUE IS A DRAWING OF THE 2nd LAKE COUNTY COURT HOUSE. THIS BUILDING WAS ERECTED IN 1849 AT A COST OF \$10,000 WITH THE ARCHITECT BEING GEORGE EARL. IT WAS 67' X 37' AND STOOD 27' HIGH AND HAD THREE ROOMS, A COURT ROOM, A JURY ROOM AND A SHERIFF'S OFFICE. THIS IS THE COURT HOUSE WHERE OUR PIONEERS AND OLD SETTLERS MET ON JULY 24, 1875 TO FORM OUR SOCIETY.



LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Schererville, Ind  
June 26, 1975

Dear Sirs:

While stopping at McDonald's in Merrillville recently, my husband picked up a Lake County Historical Society brochure. He was most pleased and surprised to find my 'NEGLECTED COURTHOUSE' poem in it.

Continued from Page 9  
Keep Jail For Posterity

Or will we survey for the next 100 years an uninspiringly designed, moderately used structure, questionable at best as answering a genuine requirement of the city and noticed little indeed by the local city dweller or cross country traveler?

We are writing to you in our desire to become members of the society. You will find a check enclosed for membership dues.

We are very much interested in the preservation of our magnificent courthouse. Continued success in your fine endeavors!

Most Sincerely,

JOHN HEIDBREDER  
308 S. Main St.  
Crown Point

Virginia Borman Grimmer





*Bicentennial Year*

1852 - 1975

## Lake County's Central States Fair

CROWN POINT, INDIANA

AUGUST 16 - 23, 1975

### THE 1st LAKE COUNTY FAIR

The first Lake County Fair was held at the Court House on Oct. 28, 1852. 69 entries were made and 30 premiums awarded, which amounted to \$48.00. The same president was reelected until the 9th Fair. Receipts for the 1st Fair were \$91.00, with expenses at \$58.25. Certainly different than these days. By Mrs. Irene Homfeld

Have we saved the old Lake Courthouse only to have it destroyed by our youth???

Recently at the request of the county commissioners, city and county police caught some youths inside the old Lake Courthouse, however commendable this is too little too late. The insides of our landmark symbol are a shambles. Some of it thru neglect, most thru vandalism!

The staggering figure of 500 million dollars per year in vandalism is done to our public school system. Are we to stand by idle while yet another public building, the foundation of our heritage, the old Lake Courthouse is destroyed brick by brick.

A youth's rights come after respect and responsibilities. If a youth respects his parents, he will respect the law, he will respect others' rights and others' property.

If a youth is responsible to himself, he will be self reliant and contribute to his community, not destroy it.

Our society has depended on the home for moral training, presupposing that each youth comes from a solid home maintained by parents who care, sad to say this is not always the case.

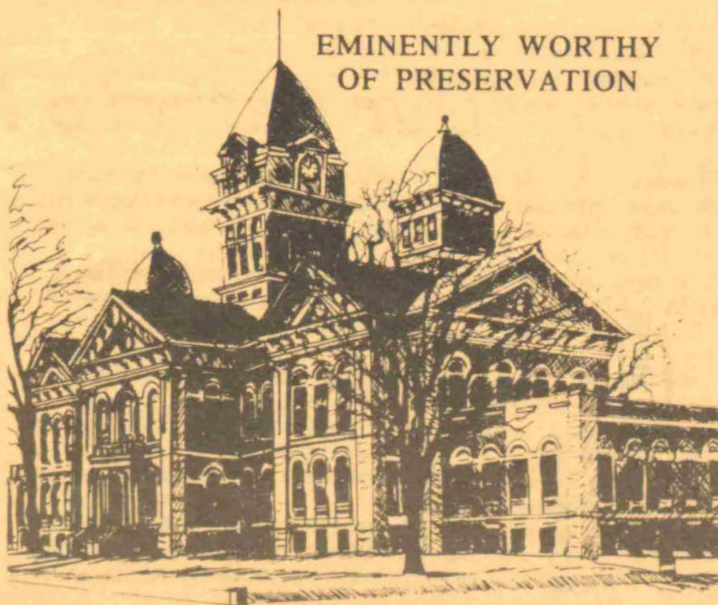
The old Lake Courthouse is the physical symbol of our heritage, but the unseen heritage of every child is his birth into a good religious home where both parents provide discipline out of love.

Thus the heritage of good parents, good teachers, honest public servants and dedicated religious people should be reflected in our youth!

We have a courthouse if. . . If this is true!

## THE LAKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

EMINENTLY WORTHY  
OF PRESERVATION



Steven Yaros Jr.  
President, Lake County Historical

Society



# Heritage Profile— Michael Grimmer

Michael Grimmer Sr. came to America from Alsace-Lorraine and made his way to Chicago in 1841 . . . In 1849 he moved to Lake County, Indiana.

His son Michael Grimmer was born in Ross Township on July 18, 1853. The senior Grimmer died when his son was only eight weeks old.

His mother later married John P. Redar of St. John Township and the family moved

there and this is where Michael grew into manhood.

Michael Grimmer came and taught in Schererville in the late 1870's where he also served as organist and choir director in St. Michael's Church.

In August of 1880 he married Helena Neuman of Schererville at St. Michael's Church. She was the daughter of Joseph and Mary Neuman.

He and his brother Peter F. Redar opened up a general store in Schererville about 1883 which he ran for seventeen years. During this time Michael Grimmer served as Post Master and St. John Township Trustee.

In November of 1896 he was elected Lake County Auditor and sold his general store. In 1900 he was re-elected to a second term. After that he served as a State Representative for two sessions in the State Legislature.

Michael Grimmer died at Crown Point in 1926, and Helena his wife died in 1934 and both are buried in St. Michael's Cemetery in Schererville.

Mr. Grimmer was a self-educated, self-made man whose public record and personal life showed him to be most loyal to his duties as a citizen of Lake County.

The Grimmer Middle School in Schererville was named in his honor.

By Steven Yaros Jr.



Michael Grimmer was an early organist and chair director of St. Michael's Church.

## *Our Catholic Heritage*

Our Catholic heritage goes way back to the time that Father Marquette passed thru this area in his birch-bark canoe and preached to the Indians.

And from the time that the first Catholic family was raised in the Calumet Region by Joseph Bailly.

Our Catholic heritage stems from the time that John Hack built the first Catholic log chapel on his farm in St. John.

And from when Nichols Scherer helped establish a Catholic church on the hill in Schererville dedicated to Saint Michael the Archangel.

So whether it was 1670s or 1820s or 1840s or the 1870s our Catholic heritage spans some 300 years in this northwest corner called Indiana's last frontier.

These and scores of others since them have built our Catholic heritage upon faith, strength and imagination and have molded it into the Diocese of Gary.

We should always be aware of the heritage that these men and women, our pioneers have left for us, the heritage of good parents, good teachers, honest public servants and dedicated religious people.

So as we look forward to our nation's bicentennial celebration we must look backward with an historical perspective to try to recapture some of our Early American spirit, our heritage of hard work, of respect, of honesty and of faith in our Catholic way of life.

STEVEN YAROS JR.



# Historical Society

## 100 Years Old Today

LAKE COUNTY

AUG 6 1975

PUBLIC LIBRARY

### NEWS HISTORICAL

(Editor's note: This article on the 100th birthday today (Thursday) of the founding of the Lake County Historical Society was submitted by the society's current president, Steven J. Yaros Jr.)

In the year 1875 a group of Lake County pioneers and old settlers met at the Lake County Courthouse on July 24 and decided to form The Old Settlers Association of Lake

County and to hold yearly meetings to renew old acquaintances and to recount pioneer experiences.

The first yearly meeting was held September 25, 1875 at the fairgrounds and after eating heartily of the sumptuous dinner, which had been spread in Floral Hall, the meeting was called to order by W. A. Clark and prayer was offered by Rev. T. H. Ball. After a few opening remarks by the chairman, an old song, entitled "The Indian Captive," was sung by Dr. Wood.

Reminiscences of old times were delivered by G. Hurlburt, R. Fancher, H. Wells, W. A. W. Holton, Amos Horner, J. H. Luther and others. Two long letters were read, one from Solon Robinson, who had gone to Tennessee for his health, and the other from Joseph Jackson of Wapello, Iowa.

It was decided that all who had come to the county prior to 1840, should be entitled to the distinction of being pioneers, while those who had come after 1840, and previous to 25 years ago, should be known as old settlers.

The objects of the Association are to renew old associations, to recover old events and to enjoy a few pleasant hours together. Meetings are to be held annually, subject to the call of the president.

The first permanent officers were: W. A. Clark, president; Oscar Dinwiddie, secretary; Rev. T. H. Ball, historical secretary; J. H. Luther, treasurer.

This fine association continues unbroken today and is known as The Lake County

Historical Society.

Below are listed its past presidents: 1875-1881, Wellington A. Clark; 1881-1891, Bartlett Woods; 1891-1899, Wellington A. Clark; 1899-1908, Oscar Dinwiddie; 1908-1910, Sam B. Woods; 1910-1912, Mrs. J. S. Crawford; 1912-1914, Lewis Little; 1914-1916, M. Elmer Dinwiddie; 1916-1920, Oscar Dinwiddie; 1920-1922, Mrs. LeGrand T. Meyer; 1922-1923, Col. LeGrand T. Meyer; 1923-1924, A. W. Stommel; 1924-1925, A. J. Smith; 1925-1926, Albert Foster; 1926-1927, J. O. Bowers; 1927-1928, S. C. Dwyer; 1928-1929, J. B. Peterson; 1929-1930, Jesse E. Wilson; 1930-1931, Claude Allman; 1931-1932, Arthur G. Taylor; 1932-1934, Matthew J. Brown; 1934-1936, Jesse Little; 1936-1940, Frank Borman; 1940-1941, Fred W. Schmal; 1941-1942, Herbert E. Graham.

Also 1942-1943, Frank Borman; 1943-1944, Dr. William Weis; 1944-1945, Dr. H. C. Groman; 1945-1946, Fred W. Schmal; 1946-1947, Otto J. Dahl; 1947-1948, Earl J. Bailey; 1948-1949, Thomas K. Fisher; 1949-1950, Paul W. Knight; 1950-1951, Roy W. Hack; 1951-1953, Dr. John W. Iddings; 1953-1954, Andrew J. Krieter; 1954-1955, Alice Mundell Demmon; 1955-1957, Fred Homfeld; 1957-1959, Joseph E. Brown; 1959-1961, Chester A. Clark; 1961-1963, Miss Rena Dahl; 1963-1966, Mrs. Thomas Haney; 1966-1967, Chester Crisler; 1967-1969, Walter Gard; 1969-1972, Miss Cerilla Saylor; 1972-1974, Miss Ijunia Ball; 1974-1975, Steven J. Yaros Jr.

### GENEALOGY WORKSHOPS

Sept. 27, 1975 - Northwest Indian Genealogy Society at Purdue in Westville. Mr. Willard Heiss on general research.

Oct. 11, 1975 - South Cook County Genealogy and Historical Society at the Holiday Inn in Harvey, Ill. Mr. Robert Tarte on New England Genealogy Research.

### NOTE

OUR IJUNIA BALL IS IN THE HOSPITAL - PLEASE DROP HER A LINE.

MS IJUNIA BALL  
AUGUSTANA HOSPITAL  
411 West Dickens  
Chicago, Illinois 60614



# The 55th Regiment of Infantry Illinois Volunteers

The 55th was organized at camp Douglas, Chicago, Illinois, and mustered on October 31, 1861. They moved to Benton Barracks, Mo. in November 1861 and on to Paducah, Ky. in January 1862. From Paducah, they went on to take part in most of the major battles fought on the western front. The 55th was mustered out August 14, 1865 after almost 4 years of service. The regiment lost during service 9 officers and 149 enlisted men whom were either killed or mortally wounded and 2 officers and 127 enlisted men stricken by disease. The total of 286 losses was nearly 30% of the regiments strength.

Today, the 55th has been officially reactivated by order of the Governor of the State of Illinois and is a chartered non-profit corporation. All officers in the 55th are commissioned by the Governor of the State of Illinois.

The 55th offers its members the following areas of participation:

1. Firing muzzle load rifles and pistols for pleasure and competition.
2. Participation in official events, ceremonies, and parades.
3. An association with men interested in the Civil War.

In the near future the 55 th plans to:

1. Form a company of men from Northwest Indiana. This company will become the nucleus for a future reactivated Indiana regiment.
2. Form a Fife and Drum Company.
3. Affiliate with the North-South Skirmish Association to shoot black powder in competition on a national level.

YOUR WELCOME

The 55th will hold a meeting on Wednesday, August 6, 1975 at 8:00pm at Components, Inc., 4400 Homerlee Ave., East Chicago, Indiana. Now is your chance to get all of your questions answered about Civil War Units.

Captain Harold Vail  
8341 Cottage Grove Pl.  
Highland, Ind.  
(219) 972-1125



# Patriotically Yours

BY MARY LOU KIESWETTER

I hear the rat-a-tat-tat of a drummer's stick, the clash of brass cymbals, and I hear Americans cheering as silver batons twirl and our glorious Star-Spangled Banner ripples by! I have waited far too long for this nourishing feast of patriotism, but now at last, as our nation approaches its 200th Birthday, we are again proclaiming our God-given heritage of liberty.

Today, citizens are standing alert at the curbside of a parade, no longer ashamed to show their emotion. Hands applaud as a brilliantly dressed color guard marches past, for the once silent majority has become vocal and we are wearing fifty stars in our eyes.

Yes, we are swinging the pendulum of time backward to the days when we allowed a warm tear to blur our vision and a lump to swell in our throat while the stirring America the Beautiful was sung. We are no longer taking for granted the "unestimable jewel" of freedom, but preserving it for those unborn.

Prayer has been removed from our public schools and the words of the Pledge of Allegiance are seldom recited in our American classrooms, but today thousands of educators are encouraging the return of both, for we have learned that we must press forward, inspired by the realization that our children and our children's children, either as free men or slaves, will know how well we in our time measured up to our citizenship responsibilities.

We have a birthday party to attend in 1976, and all America is making plans for the

great day of our nation's 200th anniversary. The red, white, and blue braid of unity is being entwined tightly, for we have discovered that being an American isn't half as bad as we have been brainwashed to believe, on the half-hour and hour, by many in the news media. We know that many of their facts are far from exact, and that much of the news has been developed into views!

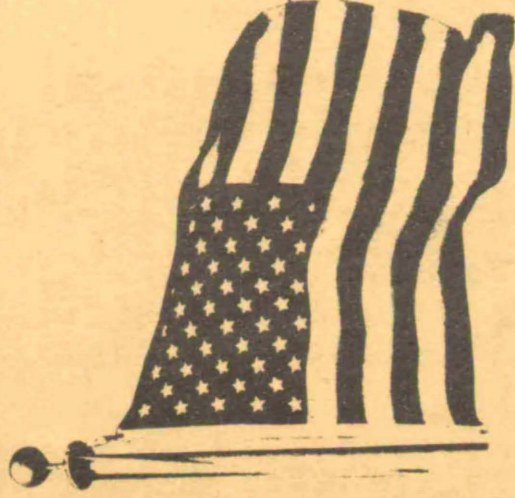
The diet of self-criticism that we have been fed has nearly brought us to patriotic decay, but the menu is being changed to wholesome, constructive "food for thought." It has dawned on us that while self-criticism has its place, so does the recognition of 200 years of accomplishment, achieved through our own blood, sweat, and money, and then shared willingly with our brothers around the world.

Yes, the demonstration of love and fervor for God, Flag, and Country has become fashionable again as the 200th Birthday of

America nears — the birthday that the rest of the world said would never take place, for no Republic has ever survived for 200 years!

Well, ours has, and plain, garden-variety Americans are bound and determined with a new spirit to make democracy work. We are writing poetry and prose again about what is ours. You'll find that flagpoles have become the taproots of our country and they are dressed daily in their best red, white, and blue. We have learned that the destiny of America isn't lodged only within the walls of the White House, or the halls of Congress, but within your living room and mine.

We as a nation have failed often, succeeded more often; cried, cheered, died, walked the moon, prayed and stayed together under difficult circumstances, for nearly 200 years, in a way of life that has made us the envy of the world. Now we are beginning to respectfully flaunt it before our native downgraders and foreign skeptics, as we lay plans for our nation's Bicentennial.





# Keep Jail For Posterity

Just off the Crown Point Square, standing in the shadows of age and little noted by the local city dweller, is the old Lake County Sheriff's Office adjoining the Jail Building.

Not the impressive monument or lifetime conversation piece that its vine-tage neighbor the old Courthouse has been, the sheriff's office can easily be forgotten and could suddenly be erased forever from time and space. Its important original function ended, it waits in limbo.

Considering the popular concern and apparent potential of the old Courthouse, its future is, at best, uncertain. It might be considered just another old building and they don't stir the imagination of many.

Its fate points to a wider concern for its many contemporaries in town. Reflecting on an area's growth and change, the ideal master plan will consider all facets of city life when establishing directions to achieve new goals. Commercial, residential, civic, educational, historic, recreational, environmental and cultural are all values of legitimate concern. None will be ignored in the successful city plan. Existing and future buildings are the physical embodiment of these goals. A city has not been conceived with taking stock of its structures before. It should be

condemnation but while time is still available to positively establish an objective evaluation and register. We may find that many of our oldest buildings are genuine resources. The city can then proceed to encourage the preservation of its optimal buildings. It cannot afford to wait for another generation and the vision of hindsight, to sound the alarm or to pay proper tribute to what might have been.

Historically, the building's status cannot be denied. It marks the establishment of the county's first major jailhouse, a highlight considering Lake County's early period. We will always remember the infamous jailbreak.

As a structure it exemplifies well the era and the county seat's first major development, a noteworthy milestone in the journal of our past accomplishments.

A building's historical and environmental value may be difficult to measure in terms of direct profit. Yet they are of greater worth than is commonly considered in terms of quality of our sometimes undefined but very human requirements of compatible and meaningful surroundings.

If the formula could be materialized, I believe that it would be found that such buildings are the exact ingredients meeting that need in the fullest sense. Surely the public acclaim to save the old Lake County Courthouse has these elements of personal

appreciation and fulfillment of its historical heritage. This element should be counted when totaling one's resources.

Its architectural merit has an indelible and subtle but very definite bearing on trade and the commercial environment. In addition to such obvious essentials for success as population concentration, parking adequacy, ease of accessibility, merchandise and service quality and variety, the character of the market place becomes a real drawing card as for example Ghilardelli Square in San Francisco, the French Quarter in New Orleans or Trolley Square in Salt Lake City. The Courthouse Square with its majority of buildings of landmark quality offers a character with a specific potential different from all other shopping centers in our area. The sheriff's office is an important element of and full compliment to the historical fabric of the adjoining business addresses.

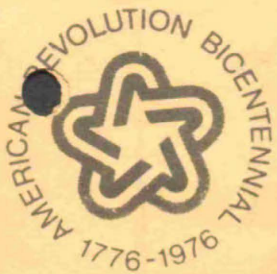
New use need not dictate restoration to the point of total interior authenticity of period. The character of the building remains inherent in the exterior design of its shell and the spatial relationship of its interior. A building with the basic elements of sound construction, functional plan layout, refinement and dignity of style need not become outdated. It can adapt to be most serviceable by modern commercial standards for a wide range of uses retaining these elements as a prestige

In the meantime, our most valuable buildings may all slip away, not by plan, but from simple neglect.

A serious observation is owed the sheriff's office. It will, I believe, withstand a penetrating appraisal. Architecturally, it is creditable. The county builders chose a classic, Victorian building, traditional for its day, as a building of the people. It features a central tower, capped with an original mansard roof and ornamental railing, elegant arched windows evenly spaced around its perimeter, a broad mid-western porch with tapered Renaissance columns, elaborate cornices, embellished eave brackets, and an adjoining brick court yard wall. It matches in scale the older business buildings and is a focal point in the green lawns of its neighborhood. These features combined make for a building of substantial architectural character, still quite distinctive on the cityscape and one of the most distinguished, considering all on the Square.

There are then, I believe, certain viable qualities about the building with which one must reckon. When considering the future of this old native one must imagine what might be in its place. Would a new development on this site be an improvement? In every sense? Will we look back on executed plans and say we have established and met our current or future needs? Will we have progressed?





# Bicentennial Activities



## Button Winner Told

Tom Schmitt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Schmitt, is the winner of the Bicentennial button design competition staged in Crown Point Community Schools, St. Mary's and Trinity Lutheran Schools. According to Mrs. Hope Becker, crafts committee chairman, his was chosen from about 100 entries.

Tom's two-inch round red, white and

blue design centered with the Courthouse spire, is lettered with "Bicentennial, Crown Point, Ind., U S A, 1776-1976."

The winning design to be adopted as Crown Point's official Bicentennial button will be available on commemorative button pins, Mrs. Becker added.

### DRESSED IN RED, WHITE AND BLUE

Both the fire plug and Polly yaros are dressed in red, white and blue as Schererville's Bicentennial Commission sponsors dressing up the plugs for our 200th Birthday Party.



compass photos by Robin Nelson

Cedar Lake has been chosen as an official Bi-Centennial town by the United States Government's American Revolutionary Bi-Centennial Association.

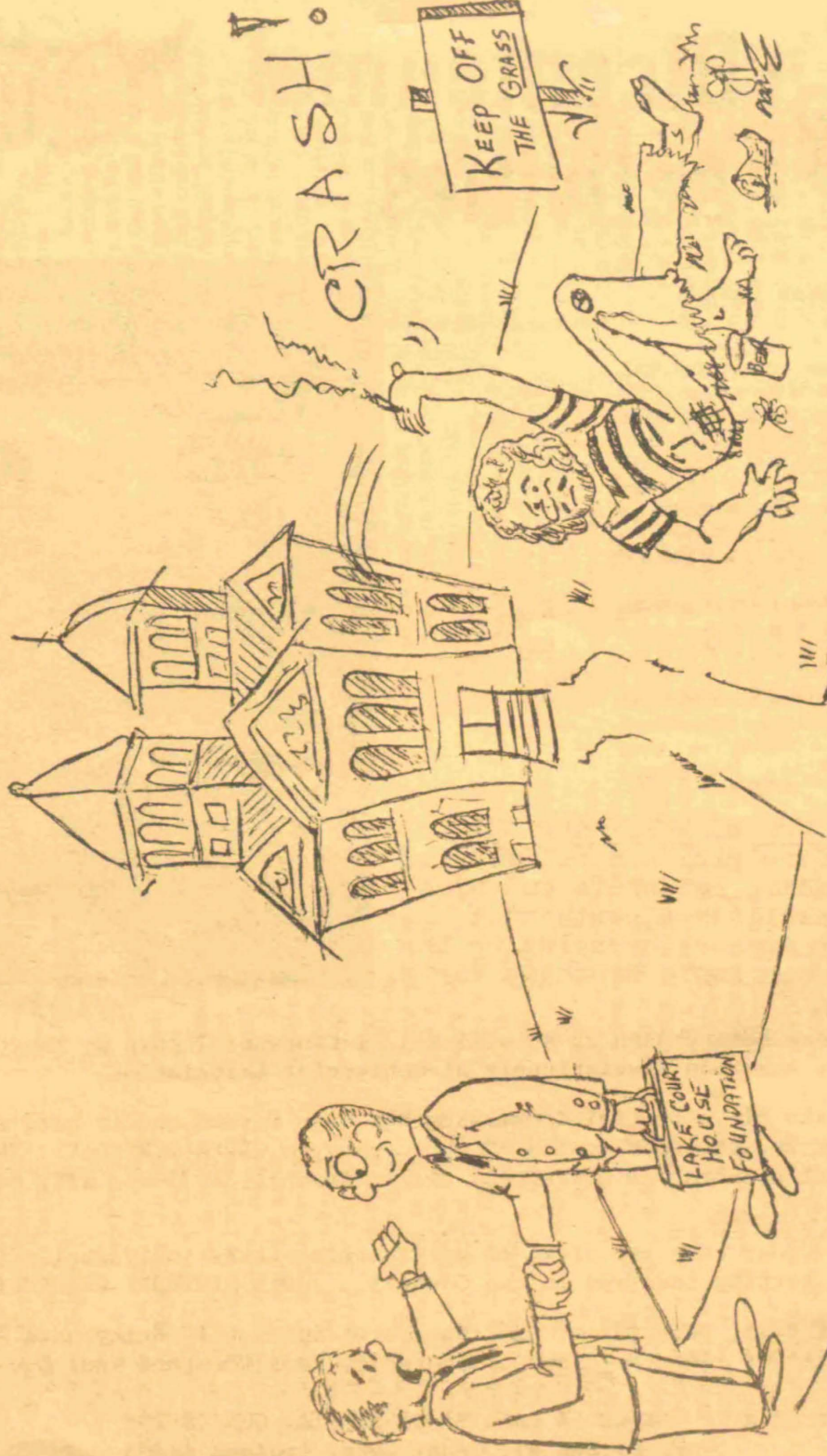
The Cedar Lake Bi-Centennial Commission has been formed and is hard at work making plans for the celebration of our Country's 200th BIRTHDAY. The Cedar Lake Bi-Centennial celebration officially starts March 1, 1975 and will run through all of 1976.

Citizens of Cedar Lake are urged to participate either individually or by forming a group and getting involved in our Country's 200th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!

We need your help, your ideas, and your participation!! Bring back Americanism the Spirit of '76! Be proud of yourself, your town and your Country.

Contact us at: THE CEDAR LAKE BI-CENTENNIAL COMMISSION  
P. O. Box 85, Cedar Lake, Indiana 46303





"WE PRESENT TO YOU THE SYMBOL  
OF OUR HERITAGE!"



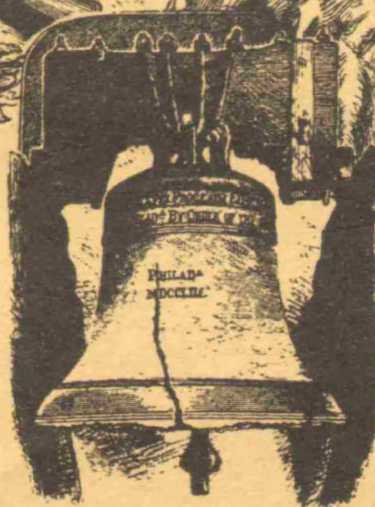
# The Story of America



## THE MINUTE MEN

Our first American soliders were farmers who agreed to rise to arms in the defense of their land should we be attacked by British troops. In Massachusetts alone there were more than 20,000 Minute Men. Their resistance at the towns of Lexington and Concord marked the opening battles of the Revolutionary War.

The Bank of Indiana is pleased to present this series in tribute to our Nation's 200th birthday.



Member FDIC

**Bank** of **I**ndiana  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



# St. Michael's Annual Festival

SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA

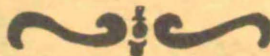
Fri., Sat. & Sun. — August 8, 9 & 10

Fish Fry — Friday Evening, 5 to 7 P. M.

Corn Roast — Saturday Evening, 5 to ??

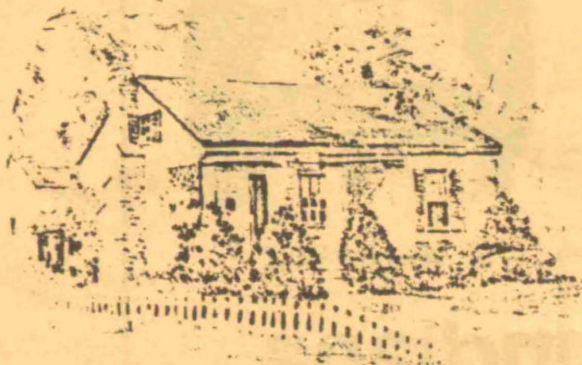
Chicken Dinner — Sunday 11 A. M. to 2 P. M.  
Family Style

Games - Refreshments - Everybody Welcome



LAKE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 614  
CROWN POINT, INDIANA 46307



The Old Homestead - 1847  
Crown Point, Ind.